

MeetYou Hypnotherapy

Cognitive Behavioural Hypnotherapy

Hypnotism: Fact & Fiction

Everything you need to know before your first session

Hypnotism: Fact & Fiction

A straightforward guide to what hypnotherapy really is — and what it isn't

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How to use this guide

Each section answers a common question about hypnotherapy. You don't need to read it cover to cover — feel free to jump to the questions that matter most to you. If anything isn't covered here, please bring it to your first session.

Introduction

If you've ever watched a stage hypnotist make someone cluck like a chicken, you could be forgiven for approaching hypnotherapy with a raised eyebrow. The truth is that clinical hypnotherapy looks nothing like what you've seen on television — and the science behind it is far more interesting than the myths.

This guide is designed to answer the questions people most commonly ask before their first session. By the end, we hope you feel informed, reassured, and ready to get the most from your therapy.

WHAT IS HYPNOSIS?

At its core, hypnosis is a state of **heightened responsiveness to suggestion**. It's not magic, and it's not sleep — it's a natural mental state that most of us enter briefly every day, for example when we're deeply absorbed in a book, daydreaming, or in that drowsy moment just before sleep.

In a therapeutic context, this state is deliberately and safely induced so that your mind becomes more open to helpful suggestions and new ways of thinking. The hypnotherapist acts as a skilled guide — but the real work happens within you.

A useful way to think about it

Imagine your mind as having two layers: a busy, analytical conscious mind that filters and questions everything, and a deeper, more imaginative unconscious mind that holds your habits, emotions, and automatic responses. Hypnotherapy works by temporarily quietening the first layer so that helpful ideas can reach the second.

WHAT DOES HYPNOSIS FEEL LIKE?

Most people describe hypnosis as deeply pleasant — similar to the feeling of being completely absorbed in a film, or the restful state between waking and sleeping. You remain aware of your surroundings and in full control at all times.

Because hypnosis is primarily a state of the mind rather than a specific physical sensation, experiences vary from person to person. Common descriptions include:

- A sense of deep physical relaxation, sometimes with a pleasant heaviness in the limbs
- A feeling of mental calm and focused attention
- Heightened awareness of your own thoughts and imagination
- A sense of time passing differently — sessions often feel shorter than they are

It's worth letting go of any fixed idea of what it 'should' feel like. Being open and curious tends to produce the best results — there is no right or wrong way to experience hypnosis.

COMMON MYTHS — AND THE TRUTH

Hypnotherapy is one of the most misunderstood therapies. Here are some of the most common misconceptions, and what the research actually shows.

MYTH

"Hypnosis means being unconscious or asleep."

FACT

You remain mentally awake and aware throughout. The word 'hypnosis' comes from the Greek for sleep, but it is a fundamentally different state — often described as 'lucid sleep' by early researchers.

MYTH

"The hypnotherapist controls my mind."

FACT

You are always in control. You cannot be made to do, say, or believe anything against your will. Research consistently confirms that people in hypnosis retain full capacity for self-protection and can end the session at any time.

MYTH

"I might get stuck in hypnosis."

FACT

This has never happened. Hypnosis is a temporary mental state — just as you cannot get stuck in a daydream, you cannot get stuck in hypnosis. You will always naturally return to full awareness.

MYTH

"Only weak-willed or gullible people can be hypnotised."

FACT

The opposite is often true. Research shows that good hypnotic subjects tend to be more intelligent, imaginative, and focused. The ability to engage with hypnosis is a cognitive skill, not a sign of naivety.

MYTH

"Hypnosis will uncover hidden memories."

FACT

Hypnosis does not improve memory recall and is not used for that purpose in evidence-based practice. In fact, attempting to 'recover' memories under hypnosis can create false ones — which is why responsible hypnotherapists do not work this way.

CAN ANYONE BE HYPNOTISED?

In short — yes. If you can daydream, get absorbed in a film, or drift into that pleasant state just before sleep, you can experience hypnosis. It is a natural capacity of the human mind.

Some people find it easier than others, and like any skill, it can improve with practice. The most important ingredients are:

- **Willingness** — you choose to be hypnotised; it cannot be done against your will
- **Openness** — approaching the session with curiosity rather than resistance
- **Focus** — the ability to direct your attention to the therapist's voice and suggestions

If you've tried hypnotherapy before and didn't find it easy, that's not unusual — and it doesn't mean it won't work for you now. With the right approach and a therapist you feel comfortable with, most people can engage well.

IS HYPNOTHERAPY SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN?

Yes. Hypnotherapy has been studied scientifically for well over a century, and there is a significant body of peer-reviewed research supporting its effectiveness for a range of conditions. The *British Medical Journal* has published clinical reviews confirming its value, and it is listed in the PubMed research database with thousands of published studies.

Research shows particularly strong evidence for hypnotherapy in the following areas:

Anxiety & Stress

Multiple randomised controlled trials show hypnosis and relaxation techniques effectively reduce anxiety, including anxiety related to medical procedures, panic disorder, and generalised worry.

Pain Management

Strong evidence from randomised trials supports hypnosis for both acute and chronic pain, with applications in dentistry, surgery preparation, cancer care, and chronic conditions.

Sleep Difficulties

Hypnotherapy combined with cognitive techniques has been shown to be effective for insomnia, particularly as part of an integrated approach.

Phobias & Habits

Systematic reviews confirm that hypnosis enhances the effects of cognitive behavioural therapy for phobias, unwanted habits, and anxiety-based conditions.

IBS & Physical Conditions

Randomised trials have shown hypnotherapy to be of value in irritable bowel syndrome, asthma, and cancer-related nausea and vomiting.

A large consumer survey published in *Which?* Magazine found that 82% of hypnotherapy clients reported an improvement in their condition following treatment — a higher satisfaction rate than many mainstream talking therapies.

IS HYPNOTHERAPY A RECOGNISED TREATMENT?

Yes. In the UK, hypnotherapy is classified by the Department of Health as a branch of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). The British Medical Association first recognised the therapeutic value of hypnosis in 1892, and reaffirmed this in a more thorough report in 1955.

When combined with psychotherapy, it is known as **hypno-psychotherapy**, which is formally recognised by the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) as an established model of integrative psychotherapy.

About Cognitive Behavioural Hypnotherapy (CBH)

The approach used at MeetYou Hypnotherapy is Cognitive Behavioural Hypnotherapy (CBH) — an evidence-based model that combines the proven techniques of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) with clinical hypnosis. This means your sessions are grounded in the same therapeutic framework used across the NHS and in psychological research, enhanced by the added depth of hypnotherapy.

HOW LONG DOES TREATMENT TAKE?

Hypnotherapy tends to work more quickly than many other forms of therapy. Research suggests an average of 4–5 sessions for most conditions, though this varies depending on what you're working on and how you respond.

It is not a single-session miracle cure in most cases — but it is often significantly quicker than longer-term therapies, and the effects tend to be lasting because we're working to change the underlying patterns, not just the surface symptoms.

- Simple or specific issues (e.g. a single phobia, smoking cessation): often 1–3 sessions
- Anxiety, stress, or low confidence: typically 4–6 sessions
- More complex or longstanding patterns: may benefit from a longer programme

We will discuss a realistic plan at your initial consultation, and review your progress together as we go.

HYPNOTHERAPY VS STAGE HYPNOSIS

Stage hypnosis and clinical hypnotherapy share some underlying principles, but they are entirely different in purpose and practice.

STAGE HYPNOSIS	HYPNOTHERAPY
• Designed for entertainment • Selects the most responsive volunteers • Uses social pressure and performance context • Aims for dramatic, visible responses • No therapeutic benefit intended	• Designed for personal change and wellbeing • Works with anyone willing to engage • Takes place in a safe, confidential space • Aims for internal shifts in thought and feeling • Grounded in evidence-based therapeutic techniques

You will not be asked to bark like a dog, cluck like a chicken, or do anything you wouldn't feel comfortable with. Your sessions are entirely private, confidential, and focused on your goals.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN YOUR SESSIONS

Knowing what to expect can help you feel more at ease — especially if this is your first experience of hypnotherapy.

1

Your Initial Consultation

Before any hypnotherapy begins, we'll spend time getting to know each other. I'll ask about what's brought you here, your background, and what you'd like to achieve. This is also your opportunity to ask any questions. There's no pressure and nothing is assumed.

2

Assessment & Planning

Together we'll build a picture of what's going on and why — looking at how your thoughts, feelings, behaviours and history all connect. From this we'll agree a clear, personalised plan for our work together.

3

Hypnotherapy Sessions

Sessions typically begin with a brief check-in, followed by a relaxation or induction process to bring you into a comfortable hypnotic state. Therapeutic work then takes place — this might include suggestion, imagery, or CBT-based techniques tailored to your goals. Sessions usually close with a gentle return to full awareness and a brief reflection.

4

Between Sessions

You may be given simple exercises or a self-hypnosis recording to use between sessions. These reinforce the work done in the room and tend to significantly speed up progress.

5

Reviewing Progress

We'll check in regularly on how things are going and adjust our approach as needed. Your feedback matters — therapy works best when it's a genuine collaboration.

Ready to take the next step?

If you have questions that aren't answered here, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I'd love to hear from you and help you decide whether hypnotherapy is the right fit for you. Email: kylha@meetyou-hypnotherapy.com
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